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Karla Poewe ^a

^a Professor of anthropology in the Anthropology Department , University of Calgary , Calgary, AB, T2N 1N4, Canada

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Scientific Neo-Paganism and the Extreme Right Then and Today: From Ludendorff's *Gotterkenntnis* to Sigrid Hunke's *Europas Eigene Religion*

KARLA POEWE

ABSTRACT *During the Weimar Republic, flourishing new religions were harnessed to usher in the cultural revolution from the right that was soon dominated by the Nazis. J. William Hauer's Deutsche Glaubensbewegung, an umbrella group for numerous new religions whose teachings ranged from versions of Hinduism to Nordic Neo-Paganism, all collaborated, at some point, with Hitler and his party. This paper shows the continuity of core ideas from Mathilde Ludendorff's Gotterkenntnis to Hauer's Glaubensbewegung and, importantly, Sigrid Hunke's Unitarier. It shows, further, the close connections between these forms of neo-paganism and the present-day European New Right. The paradoxical co-occurrence in fascism of a religious populism and a meta-political elitism, philosophical vitalism, and dreams of national or European rebirth has its roots in these French and German forms of neo-paganism.*

Introduction¹

The purpose of this paper is to describe the religious beliefs that galvanized Conservative Revolutionaries of the Weimar Republic and galvanize members of the European New Right today. These religions were part of the *völkisch* (folkish) movement (Mosse, 1981) which, along with numerous other associations, constituted what Armin Mohler (1989a) called the Conservative Revolution. Mohler also equated the guiding ideas of the Conservative Revolution with fascism (1989b: 103, 111).²

According to Roger Woods, the Conservative Revolution was an "intellectual movement which was driven by the interaction of culture and politics, ideas and ideology" (Woods, 1996: 5). While Woods probed the thought processes that shaped the extreme right by looking at a "broad mix of sources", including novels, diaries, philosophical works, cultural and political journalism, and political tracts (ibid), this paper examines religious issues that Woods ignored in the writings of Mathilde Ludendorff, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, and Sigrid Hunke.

The guiding ideas of the Conservative Revolution saturated Weimar thinking. They were held by 600,000 German Christians, by 100,000 adherents of Erich and Mathilde Ludendorff's movement (Mecklenburg, 1996: 375), by Hauer's *Glaubensbewegung* (faith movement), by numerous para-military groups like *Stahlhelm* [steel helmet] by the 400,000-strong *Jungdeutscher Orden* [German Youth League] (Woods, 1996: 3), and by the millions of readers of literature that was at once religious, political, and militaristic. Neither academics, nor

Christians who formed the Confessional Church, were immune to these ideas (Fischer, 1990; Lixfeld, 1994; Dibelius, 1927: 121–130).

Mohler and Links to the New Right

As Armin Mohler is a natural link between the Conservative Revolution and the New Right, a few words about him are in order. Born in 1920, Mohler sees himself as a fascist in the style of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Spanish Phalanx in the 1930s whose purpose it was to defend a Spanish way of life against capitalism, socialism, and liberalism. Like M. Ludendorff, Hauer, and Hunke, Mohler is highly educated. The last two, especially, are among the main meta-political thinkers of the New Right, generally, and the Thule Seminar, a German New Right think tank, specifically. Since 1970, Mohler has been a member of the committee of patrons of the *Nouvelle École* and has frequently given talks at the national colloquia of G.R.E.C.E. (Group for Research of the European Civilization) in France.³ He writes for New Right journals like *Criticón* and has contacts with political leaders like Franz Schönhuber, one of the founders of the right-wing *Republikaner* (Republican) party (REP), and Gerhard Frey, millionaire leader of the *Deutsche Volksumion* (German People's Union), DVU (Mecklenburg, 1996: 524–525; Kratz, 1994: 196ff).⁴

There is a continuity of persons, ideas, and structures from the Conservative Revolution to National Socialism to the New Right. This continuity has to do with the fact that world-view ideologues, especially M. Ludendorff and Hunke, founded and re-founded not only religious and world-view communities, but also publishing houses, academies, youth organizations, and memorial places. Their calendars are filled with conferences, seminars, and solstice festivities. Informally, members of the *Bund für Gotterkenntnis* (BfG, League for God-cognition) and the *Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft* (DUR, Religious Community of German Unitarians) have contacts with political parties like the *Republikaner*, the *Nationaldemokratische Partei* (National Democratic Party), even the *Christlich Demokratische Union* (CDU, Christian Democratic Union) and the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD, Social Democratic Party of Germany). They cultivate contacts with publishers of books on the New Right and New Age, and their ideas are alive in current New Right journals (Mecklenburg, 1996: 374–375, 378–379).

The meta-politics of the Conservative Revolution and the New Right rests on a rejection of Christianity and the affirmation of paganism. In their eyes, Christianity is totalitarian, Jewish, and dualistic. Its removal reveals neopaganism which is whole, organic, and “affirmative of all that is” (Mohler, 1989a; de Benoist, 1982: 56; Ludendorff, 1921: 118; Hunke, 1987; Lixfeld, 1994: 69; Krebs, 1981a: 15–22).

The above thrust privileges *Schicksal* (Moira; fate) or the *Weltganze* (cosmos) above individuals, putting these in a part-whole relationship (de Benoist, 1982: 57). Within the whole may be *Spannungen* (creative tension), but not,⁵ as in the Judeo-Christian tradition, *Spaltungen* (divisions owing to dualism) (Mohler, 1989a: 122). Rather than make radical moral judgements of good and bad,⁶ fascists accept any and all happenings as meaningful. It is an aesthetic rather than a moral stance, so that the human being is not basically good (liberalism) or bad (Christianity), but *unvollkommen* (imperfect), and this is so by virtue of

being but a part of a whole (ibid: 124; de Benoist, 1982: 57–8). The part-whole relationship does not debase, since the part shares in the dignity of the whole. Yahwe, by virtue of being “totally-Other”, debases totally the human being (de Benoist, 1982: 59)

According to Mohler, the key to fascism is captured in Nietzsche’s notion of ‘Amor fati’, which means ‘love of the world as it is’, with its eternal dialectic between birth and destruction (*Vernichtung*)—the world, as it is *now* is without hope of improvement in the beyond or in the distant future (Mohler, 1989a: 125, his emphasis). Mohler, once private secretary to Ernst Jünger, captures perfectly Jünger’s notion of heroic realism. The term ‘heroic’, Mohler writes, is appropriate, because this world is not to be seen as realistic (in the sense of true to reality) in order to allow us to postulate another and better one, but to affirm the world as it is (ibid: 125).

Neo-pagans accuse *Judenchristentum* (Jewish-Christianity) of constituting a “dictatorship of morality”. Premised on unworthiness and the fall, its perspective is moral and linear in time (de Benoist, 1982: 98). By contrast, for neo-pagans, history is like life. It sits on the premise that as human beings are innocent, so is historical development (ibid: 108).

The thought processes of fascist ideologues from Weimar to the present vary in detail, but follow the same basic pattern. Rejection of Christianity is the way to the recovery of neo-paganism. Neo-paganism affirms a unitarian world-all (universe). This unitarian world-all manifests itself in a plurality of distinct organic *Völker* (peoples) and organic individuals.⁷ What makes *Völker* and individuals distinct and different are, for M. Ludendorff, the *Volksseele* which refers simultaneously to the quality of genius (*Genialität*) and biological traits. Both are one’s *Rasseerbgut* (race-inheritance), although *Genialität* is inherited and passed on through undying works of art and knowledge (Ludendorff, 1921: 368). Hunke’s ideas are an adaptation to present conditions. Rather than dwell on a single *Volk* (people/nation), she thinks in terms of Europe and *Genialität* becomes a specific European thought structure (Hunke, 1987: 8). This scheme sits on the same ‘heroic realist’ epistemology as that developed by Jünger, except that the ‘Amor fati’ of Nietzsche and Jünger’s ideas become the unity of natural science and religion for Ludendorff and Hunke. The unity of natural science and religion is an expression of the fact that “as the soul experienced” so “reason saw” (Ludendorff, 1921: 9, 113).⁸ In the following sections we look at the persons and thought of Ludendorff and Hunke.

Mathilde Ludendorff (1877–1966)

Mathilde Ludendorff, born 4. 10. 1877, was the third daughter of a Lutheran minister, Dr. Bernhard Spieß of Wiesbaden. In 1904, she married the zoologist Gustav Adolf von Kemnitz (Haack, 1981: 133). Two years later, she withdrew officially from the church and in 1913, she received her doctorate in neurology. With this science background, she criticized both the occult and Christianity⁹ and prepared “a new religion” (Ludendorff, 1921: 115).

Some years after she became widowed in 1916, Mathilde von Kemnitz married a Major Kleine whom she divorced in order to marry General Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937) in 1926 (Haack, 1981: 133). Erich Ludendorff was also divorced.

Apparently, Mathilde von Kemnitz had met Ludendorff in 1923 while he was still suffering from the defeat of the first world war. Unlike Ludendorff, Mathilde brimmed with confidence, for, according to the diary of Alfred Rosenberg, she offered herself to Hitler as *Führerin* (*Der Spiegel*, 1960: 30). Although she was more right wing than Hitler, she was a champion of gender equality (see also Payne, 1995: 13; Kneller, 1941: 232).

The book that made her name was *Triumph des Unsterblichkeitwillens* (Triumph of the Will to Immortality), published in 1921. This book, numerous other publications, the endorsement by Erich Ludendorff, and the organizations that Mathilde and Erich founded to disseminate their political and philosophic-religious ideas, constituted Mathilde Ludendorff's science-based religion and/or world-view

(cf. Smart, 1997).¹⁰

As the organizational structure resembles that of the New Right today, it is worth describing it here. In 1925, Erich Ludendorff founded an umbrella organization called *Tannenbergbund* (Tannenberg League) that had approximately 100,000 members (Mecklenburg, 1996: 375). Its aim was to disseminate a specific meta-politics. Part of the umbrella organization was the *Verein Deutschvolk* (German Volk Society), founded in 1930. Its purpose was to disseminate Mathilde Ludendorff's science-based religious views called *Gotterkenntnis* (God-knowledge/God-cognition). These two organizations which shared many ideas with National Socialism were, for that very reason, prohibited in 1933 (Haack, 1981: 139). The Ludendorff publishing house survived. What also survived is the pattern of combining an 'elitist' meta-politics with a subliminal common-folk organicist spirituality.

In 1937, following a new rapprochement between Hitler and Ludendorff, the latter founded the *Verein Deutsche Gotterkenntnis* (Society for German God-knowledge). Its members were Mathilde's followers. It was dormant between 1945 and 1951, only to be reactivated under the new name of *Bund für Gotterkenntnis* (League for God-knowledge). It had c. 12,000 members, when the Bavarian Administrative Court prohibited its existence in 1961 (Mecklenburg, 1996: 374). As it is done today, the court judged the organization to be *verfassungsfeindlich* (hostile to the constitution). The essential ideas of Mathilde's *Gotterkenntnis* live, however, on in the *Unitarier* of Sigrid Hunke.¹¹

The *Bund für Gotterkenntnis* (Mathilde Ludendorff)

If a people (*Volk*) wants to be true to itself, it needs some unity (*Geschlossenheit*), otherwise the armed forces have no support.

This unity is achieved through the people's construction of their life which the knowledge of my wife is bringing about. Her teachings unify race-inheritance (*Rasseerbgut*), belief, justice, culture and economy, and bring these in harmony (*Einklang*) with the findings of the natural sciences. It firmly roots the human being in his *Volk* and state and gives him freedom to experience his God. (Erich Ludendorff, 1935: 3).

This endorsement by Erich Ludendorff of his wife Mathilde's 'findings' provided both the context and the thrust of the new religion that she founded and named *Gotterkenntnis* (God-knowledge). It also guaranteed that her books enjoyed "phenomenal" sales, "rapidly approaching the million mark" (Kneller,

1941: 193, footnote 40). The context was Germany's, and especially Ludendorff's, defeat in WWI and the perceived denigration of the Germans in Versailles. The thrust of Mathilde's religion, simultaneously meta-political, elitist, and folk spiritual, was nothing other than the push of the extreme right to construct a new nationalism. This nationalism would be firmly rooted in the unity of all those things that make for conflict, disharmony, and factionalism. Conflicts between religion and science were resolved by basing both on the same style of thought (*gleicher Denkstil*) (Hunke, 1987: 253).

Translated Excerpts from Mathilde Ludendorff's book *Aus der Gotterkenntnis meiner Werke*

Mathilde von Kemnitz begins her religion with rhetorical questions and answers, both addressed to potential followers. What do you want?, she asks. Do you want sham consolation (*Scheintrost*) for your yearnings for good fortune (*Glückssehnsucht*), sham consolation for your aversion to suffering (*Leidscheu*), sham consolation for all the pain and misfortune that overcame you, or rather do you want the truth? (Ludendorff, 1935: 5; for similar emphasis see Hunke, 1997: 363).

Only if you want truth, bared reality, whatever it might be, only then is there sense in listening to me... If you want sham consolation, it is better that you turn to a Christian or some other sort of non-Christian religion, or to any of the occult teachings ... , for all of these promise good fortune before or after death, promise help for incurred injury (*Leid*), promise—and this is particularly important to many of you—that all bad deeds will be punished by God, all good ones rewarded (Ludendorff, 1935: 5).

Mathilde Ludendorff makes quite clear that her message is not for those who hanker after good fortune (*Glücksgier*) or for those who avoid pain (*Leidscheu*) (ibid: 6). When she wrote her works, she claims, she only longed and asked for truth, and only researched to find reality. She left behind all her desire for good fortune and avoidance of pain. Consequently, writes Mathilde Ludendorff, her works contain only "uncovered reality" (*enthüllte Wirklichkeit*). If her works express sympathy at all, it is an unintended consequence of reality (*Tatsächlichkeit*). It is not the consequence of faith, fantasy, hope or desire (ibid). Rather, Mathilde Ludendorff's teachings place on the shoulder's of each individual the uncomfortable responsibility for his own soul and for the fate (*Schicksal*) of his own people (*Volk*) (ibid; cf. Hauer, 1938: 80). Only bared truth (*enthüllte Wahrheit*) will protect one's own people and other peoples from decline (*Untergang*) to degeneration (*Entartung*) (ibid: 7).

Christianity does not convince. "Natural science has replaced it ... Furthermore, our race (ethnic-national) consciousness has become too strong to let us overlook the fact that all the words of the Bible are purely Jewish or derived from Jewishness. Consequently, biblical teachings are a danger for our Volk" (ibid: 8).

Her works, she claims, only give one a hold on life, suffering, and death, because she recognized, in harmony with the facts, the sense of human life and the "necessity of death" (*Todesmuß*). Along with these go the sense of the imperfection (*Unvollkommenheit*) of the human soul, the sense of purity of race

and maintenance of folk characteristics, the sense of freedom and its ethical (*sittlich*) limits, and, finally, the dangers that threaten the life of individuals and *Völker* (ibid: 7–8).

I warned of the *Volk*-destructive tendencies of religion and the occult, writes Mathilde Ludendorff, but spared most philosophers. Excluded from the latter, however, are the Enlightenment philosophers whose dangerous teachings about the unlimited freedom of the individual did not incorporate ethical constraints and duties to maintain the *Volk*. Consequently, *Völker* in full bloom were seriously harmed. Also harmed were peoples subjected to imperial greed and power under the guise of religion. Many of these peoples died out (ibid: 14), a fear also echoed by Krebs (1997).

My works, writes Mathilde Ludendorff, are proof of the fact that, unlike individual human beings, *Völker* are not subject to the necessity of death (*Todesmuß*). Rather, the death of *Völker* is related to intellectual degeneration, weakening of the will to motherhood (*Mutterschaftswillen*), and consequent reduction in the number of births (Ludendorff, 1935: 15). The will to truth (*Wille zur Wahrheit*) is a godly willing. Truth is discovered only by those who are worthy of it, because at least during the sacred hours of research, they are above utilitarianism, avoidance of pain, and desire for good fortune (ibid: 16).

Some of Ludendorff's 'Basic Findings'

The Meaning of Human Life

The world-all (*Weltall*)¹² is spiritualized (*durchseelt*) by the godly Being in all manifestations. This Being makes itself known as will, but in the human being is also self-consciously experienced.

The world-all is devoid of devils, angels, and demons; it is also free of personal gods or a personal God who leads the world while being outside of it (ibid: 23). All concepts of god are nothing other than human reason gone wrong. The Being of all appearances of the world-all cannot be grasped by human reason, only its effects can be grasped.¹³

According to Mathilde Ludendorff, reason is useless here. At best, it does harm when it attempts to conceptualize the Being of all manifestations, as 'God'. The Being of manifestations is not conceivable, but it can be experienced. This experience in our soul is the only way to get to the Being of all manifestations, to the godly. One can only experience aspects of the godly in one's soul or perceive it allegorically in nature, words, deeds, and works (ibid: 23–24).

We call the Being of all manifestations of the world-all 'God' or 'godliness', remembering, however, that this word has nothing to do with the notions of God (be it in the theistic, deistic or pantheistic sense) of other religions. Only a few peoples of the world surmised, as did the Samoans, that the becoming of the world and its life forms was gradual, taking hundreds of thousands of years to develop (ibid: 25). Mathilde Ludendorff's evolution is spiritualized. Thus, mechanical explanations of evolution based on notions of the survival of the fittest, battle for existence, or competition generally do not apply. Rather, Mathilde Ludendorff postulates for each rung of the developmental ladder the breakthrough of a new will, a godly will that strives toward the goal of ever greater alertness until full human consciousness is reached (ibid). One is reminded here

of Nietzsche's "will to a stronger and higher existence", which played such an important role in National Socialism (Kneller, 1941: 102).

The Meaning of Todesmuß or the Necessity of Death

The necessity of death from old age was law, without exception, long before the arrival of human beings. To age and wither according to the laws of nature occurs only among multi-celled life forms. The necessity to die is not a later punishment, rather it is a holy ability (*heiliges Können*). The imperfection of human life has deep meaning.

The inevitability of death was the necessary precondition to make possible the humans' godly right, as only life form of the godly aspect of the world-all, to experience, fulfil, and radiate godly volition unto present and future generations, and thus share in the godly (ibid: 28).

Every human who achieves harmony with godly volition is a unique personality who realizes a never before and never again to appear singularity of the godly experience (ibid). Yet despite the multiplicity of self-conscious experiences of God, the maintenance of this unique personality into eternity, its immortality, would mean too much constricting of the godly. The human *necessity to die* protects the aware God-experience from such constriction. Allegorically speaking, the individual human being, who fulfilled the meaning of his/her life by the time of his death, is a "breath of God" (ibid).

Death of old age was the precondition of becoming human (ibid: 29). Therefore, the necessity to die is the opposite of punishment. It is a holy ability that is in harmony with the facts uncovered by the natural sciences (ibid).

The necessity of death is the motive force behind evolution that culminated in the most alert life form, the human being (ibid: 30). The human being, because of his ability to experience the fate (*Schicksal*) of necessary death, who knows therefore his own fate long before it takes place, can—through this death-knowledge—receive a holy motivation to create himself. He can ennoble or perfect himself when he understands clearly that this death means vanishing for all eternity so that the godly can only be self-consciously experienced before death.

The knowledge of the certainty of death warns the human being to use each day of his existence meaningfully. In death, the self-consciousness of the human being disappears. Nothing other than a non-conscious godly will, which also lives in all material, dwells in the cells of the body, until these cells decay into the basic forms from which they were constructed. Before this death, the human being can, however, as often and as long as he wants, participate in the godly or the immortal; he can experience 'eternities' that are not subject to time. Furthermore, he can radiate his godliness-experience onto his undying *Volk*, just as he passes on his inheritance through his children to future generations. The human being dies for the sake of his sublime office, aware of *experiencing* immortality; immortal, however, is his *Volk* (ibid: 33; see also Kneller, 1941: 56, 57).

Völker are immortal.¹⁴ They can, however, be exterminated by the enemy through war or they can die from the known signs of a *Volk's* disease, namely, the disappearance of the joy of motherhood. Other religions teach the opposite, namely that the individual is immortal among mortal *Völker*. Her fierce anti-Semitism is expressed fully, when she writes: "The imperialistic hegemonic

goals of Jewish confessions (Mosaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity) believe only in the immortality of the 'chosen Volk', all others were subject to extermination" (ibid: 33).

In sum, the core elements of Ludendorff's truth-only religion consist of an effort to strip life of all (false) religions and occult teachings. Judeo-Christianity, other religions, and the occult block the will and therefore destroy the Volk. Without the "will to truth and freedom", on the one hand, and the "must to face death and inevitabilities", on the other hand, the purity and maintenance of the race and Volk are impossible. Necessary death and human imperfectability are the godly preconditions that will human beings to radiate godly volition unto present and future generations. Finally, Ludendorff's religion distinguishes between *experiencing* (godliness and eternity) and *being* (mortal and imperfect).

Sigrid Hunke (1913–)

Sigrid Hunke was born April 26, 1913. She studied philosophy, psychology, and science of religion with Martin Heidegger, Eduard Spranger, Karlfried Graf Dürkheim, Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß, and Hermann Mandel. In 1941, she received her PhD under the supervision of Clauß in the philosophical faculty at the University of Berlin (now Humboldt University) (Kratz, 1994: 134). According to Kratz (ibid), Clauß was an SS-race psychologist and Hunke toed the party line in her dissertation. Hunke became a main ideologue of the *Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft e.V.* (DUR, Religious Community of German Unitarians) and DUR referred positively to the work of Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß into the 1980s (ibid; cf. Hauer, 1938: 70). DUR was founded in 1950. It has its headquarters in Hamburg, and it has about 2,600 followers (Mecklenburg, 1996: 378).¹⁵

In 1942, Hunke married the diplomat Peter H. Schulze with whom she lived in Tangier until 1944 (Mecklenburg, 1996: 474). She became a member of DUR in the 1950s. In the 1960s, she wrote two significant books: (1) the bestseller *Allahs Sonne über dem Abendland* (1960, Allah's Sun over the Occident) and (2) *Europas andere Religion* (1969, Europe's Other Religion). Her life in Tangier and her government-sponsored travels through several Arabic countries in 1967 crystallized her biases for, and notions of, a distinctive *Denkstruktur* (pattern of thought) of Europeans and Arabs, as against Orientals, including the Greeks. The path is clear for a European religion that acknowledges its debt to medieval Arabic scholars, but is irreconcilably opposed to the Judeo-Christian tradition, also known as Orientalism (Hunke, 1969; Hunke, 1987).

Like most prominent fascist and New Right thinkers who anticipate becoming ancestors in the cult of ancestral veneration, the Ludendorffs for example, Hunke helped found the *Sigrid-Hunke-Gesellschaft* (Sigrid-Hunke-Society) in 1982. From 1971 to 1983, she was vice president and from 1985 to 1988, she was honorary president of DUR (Mecklenburg, 1996: 378). During this time, two further books that define the world-view of the Unitarier were published by her: (1) *Der dialektische Unitarismus* (Dialectical Unitarism, 1982, cited in Mecklenburg, 1996: 474) and (2) *Europas eigene Religion* (Europe's Own Religion, 1997).

Despite the fact that Hunke is connected with the elitist Thule Seminar¹⁶ and with G.R.E.C.E., Hunke was honored with the Schiller prize for 'German cultural works in the European Spirit'. In 1988, she received the highest distinction for

science and art from the Egyptian President Mubarak and became the only woman and European to sit in the highest Council for matters concerning Islam.

In 1989, she left DUR to join a related body named *Bund deutscher Unitarier* (BDU, League of German Unitarians). That same year, she published the book *Vom Untergang des Abendlandes zum Aufgang Europas* (From the Decline of the West to the Rise of Europe). As chief ideologue of DUR (and Thule), Hunke deeply influenced the ideological development of the New Right. Such New Right 'gurus' as Alain de Benoist (*Heide sein—Being Pagan*, 1982) and Pierre Krebs (*Das Unvergängliche Erbe—Undying Heritage*, 1981a), both French by birth, are heavily indebted to the thought of Sigrid Hunke (interview with Pierre Krebs, summer 1997).

Deutsche Unitarier: Their Self-Portrayal

On the Internet,¹⁷ the German *Unitarier* describe themselves as a community of people on the way who do not have their beliefs anchored in any religious dogma. Their central idea is that the source of personal religious truth is buried within the individual.¹⁸ In the preamble of their basic ideas, the central notion is formulated as the "Maintenance of the freedom to one's personal viewpoint". The unitarian community holds the common conviction that each human being has the capacity for religious independence.

To *Unitarier*, religion refers to experiencing, in a self-aware fashion, meaningful connections and to structuring one's own life so that it is fraught with meaning. Subject to ever new discoveries, Unitarierism is the way to protect life from resignation. It begins with the religious conviction that there is security in the unity of all being, which is held together by the same numinous power that holds together personal unity.

For its development, religion requires loving encouragement and carefully directed challenges in a trustworthy environment. This is the reason why *Unitarier* need a religious community. *Unitarische* religion is therefore simultaneously a religion of self-responsibility as well as a religion of mutual communication and understanding. It lives through personal responsibility, through responsibility for fellow human beings and for their environment.

Unitarierism is a demanding religion. It is not a comfortable religion (cf. Ludendorff, 1935). No-one is relieved of thinking for him- or herself. According to their self-description, Unitarierism demands and promotes *mitdenken* (independent thinking), and acting responsibly. *Unitarier* do not missionize; they convince.

As *Unitarier* have no dogma, they formulate common basic ideas and inform themselves of newly developed common insights on a continuous basis. They take into account actual developments, without creating conflicts between personal religious views and results of scientific research. According to the *Unitarier*, no religion can claim that it alone has a hold on absolute and valid truth, for the source of religion lies within the (subconscious of the) human being. As with fascism generally, so religion too must grow naturally out of the human subconscious, if it is to be the vital force of the national or European organism. It cannot admit any "absolute and universal moral norms: truth, justice, and law exist only in order to serve the needs of the collectivity" (Sternhell, 1994: 10; Payne, 1995).

Even in the knowledge of life's contradictions and harshness, *Unitarier* honor life. The multiplicity of appearances means wealth. Efforts to contain this multiplicity is opposed. The death of individual beings is a necessary precondition for the development of multiplicity (cf. Ludendorff, 1935). The human being is one of the appearances of nature and thus is part of the evolution of life. He is an inseparable whole. Physically, spiritually, and intellectually humans develop in reciprocal play with their environment. Consequently, they have a right to their differences.

As the human being has the capacity to recognize and assess complex inter-relationships, he is fully responsible for his behavior *vis-à-vis* his environment and himself. In all that he decides or that happens to him are found opportunities for development and possibilities of danger. Strengths and weaknesses, strokes of fate, and guilty entanglements require grappling and coming to terms with.

Death ends life. Beyond death there is no certainty. This knowledge strengthens humans to live conscious and fulfilled lives. Each human being leaves his footprints behind and these outlast death.

The Thought of Sigrid Hunke

Sigrid Hunke's thought—the above self-description is an aspect of it—is but a variation and current version not only of Mathilde Ludendorff, but also importantly of J. Wilhelm Hauer (1938: 64). What makes it current are some shifts in terminology, for example, away from Ludendorff's *Volksseele* (the soul of a people) and Hauer's *Westindogermanen* (West-Indogermans), *Kulturkreis* (culture circle), or *die artbestimmte Linie der westindogermanischen Geistesgeschichte* (the intellectual history specific to the West-Indogermanic manner of thought) (ibid: 64) to *europäische Denkstruktur* (European thought structure) or *Denkstil* (style of thought). Hunke's thought is similar in that Hunke, like Hauer who called it *westindogermanisch*, traces a specific European thought structure (*spezifisch 'europäische' Denkstruktur*) (Hunke, 1987: 8; Hunke, 1969). Hunke finds this thought-lineage represented by Europe's heretics that include: Pelagius, Johannes Eriugena, Gottschalk dem Sachsen, Hugo von St. Viktor, Franziskus von Assisi, and especially Meister Eckhart, Seuse, Tauler, and also Nikolaus Cusanus, Hans Denck, Sebastian Franck, Kaspar von Schwenckfeld, Valentin Weigel, Jakob Böhme, Paracelsus, George Fox, Johann Scheffler (Angelus Silesius), Franz von Baader, and finally, Schleiermacher, Novalis, Hölderlin, Goethe, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Rilke, and even Teilhard de Chardin (Hunke, 1969: 12). While Hunke's speculations resemble those of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, he is not mentioned.

Hauer and Hunke see the occurrence of a major separation in the early Middle Ages between, in the case of Hauer, *westindogermanisches Denken* (West-Indogermanic thought pattern) and Christianity, in the case of Hunke, *europäisches Denken* (European thought pattern) and Christianity (see also Krebs, 1981b: 28). This parting of the way of two discrete thought structures is linked, in the first instance, to the figure of Scotus Eriugena (Hauer, 1938: 64–65; Hunke, 1969: 134ff). In the early Middle Ages, writes Hauer (1938: 64–65), we see a separation from Christianity of the West-Indo-Germanic history of thought (*Geistesgeschichte*) (Steuckers, 1990: 68), as shown by the strongly characteristic line of

thought that began with Scotus Eriugena in the ninth century. It was carried forward and developed independently by German mystics, humanism, and the Renaissance. Just such an independent line of thought, what Hunke calls an underground religion, centered primarily on 'European' heretics, including, as we have seen, Pelagius before and Eckhart after Eriugena, is the essence of Hunke's 'other religion'. While there were mutual influences between Christianity and Europe's other religion through the centuries, the absolute separation between them occurred with Nietzsche (Hauer, 1938: 65; see also Kneller, 1941: 102–103).

There are some other minor differences in the thinking of Hauer and Hunke. For example, Hauer thought in terms of *Kulturkreise* (culture circles) that were linked to specific epochs each of which was penetrated by one major idea. Thus the Enlightenment period was consumed by the idea of autonomous reason, Idealism by *das schaffende Ich* (the creative I), Romanticism by *schöpferische Lebensgründe* (the creative foundations of life), the following epoch by the idea of natural law, and the current epoch (1930) by race (Hauer, 1938: 65). Hunke's take, heeding current developments, is simpler. She argues that the same major idea, namely unity (*Einheit*), characterized *Europe's Own Religion* (1997) from its inception. It made a stark and unbridgeable contrast with the dualism of Christianity.

Conclusion

In Germany and France, neo-paganism is the heart of fascism and the New Right. It constitutes a radical criticism and rejection of 'Jewish-Christianity'. It rejects Christianity for its imperialism (Ludendorff, 1935), its radical judgements, its totalitarianism, its privileging of the sense of incurred injury (*Leid*) (ibid; Hunke, 1997: 33), its linear history, its denigration of woman and humanity, its source in the culture of the *Hurriter* (Jews) (Hunke, 1997: 31–33).

By contrast, neo-paganism sees itself as the restorer of that which Christianity took from it: the unity of humanity and godliness, science and religion, human being and environment. To neo-pagans, the human being is once more the measure of all things. No nation nor ethnicity is privileged above any other. Eternal becoming is always pluralistic. There is no single God, any more than there is one truth, nor one humanity (de Benoist, 1982: 107). The *Unnatur* (things unnatural) that burns in the soul of the *Hurriter*, the *Jammertal* (valley of suffering) from which they emerged and into which they turned the world, is rejected (Hunke, 1997: 31, 32). Hunke finds this rejection and the affirmation of unity in European heretics through the ages. The specific European structure of thought was Europe's other religion and is now its own.

Like Mohler and Vermeil, Kratz (1994) argues that not only the gods of neo-paganism, but also those of the New Age are brown. The spiritual movement centered on a godliness in harmony with nature and the cosmos, working in and through all things human, is today called New Age. In the 1920s, it was called *völkische Bewegung* (ibid: 8). For leftists and liberals, he argues, all this falls within the rubric of a constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion and this informs the way in which we conduct our research. Fascists, by contrast, saw and see in this constitutional guarantee an opportunity to perpetuate their ideology (ibid).

I struggled hard against Kratz's shocking thesis. After all, Americans accept that New Age and neo-paganism are politically left, green, and correct. How can the same basic ideas be left in North America, but right in Continental Europe? Implicitly, this paper addresses this question, but offers at best a partial answer, one in need of further serious research.

Firstly, it must be conceded that in attitudes like anti-Christianity, anti-capitalism, rejection of dualism, search for pre-Christian roots, ancestor veneration, organicism, assigning meaning to all happenings, love of the world as it is, concern for ecology, and blurring of faith and knowledge, National Socialism and neo-paganism are in agreement. While there are also overlaps with socialism, in matters of ancestor veneration, love of the world as it is, for example, socialism parts company. By contrast, green is an ambivalent phenomenon in left-right politics and could as likely be brown.

Secondly, it may be that the rebirth of nordic-germanic antiquity and its transformation in the 1920s into a spiritual ethnic movement centered on the notion of racial uniqueness, had something to do with the traumatic defeat of World War I and the perceived degradation of Versailles. Today, however, it is more than a *Historikerstreit*. It is a struggle between two irreconcilable world-views (Krebs, 1990a). However, it goes largely unnoticed.

The explicit emphasis on race by the Nazis has become implicit, as attention is deflected from it to ecology, evolution, and aesthetics. Being unitarian, neo-pagans and the New Right blur differences, not only between conservatives and the extreme right, nor between left and right, but between politics and religion, in other words, the terrain on which the struggle is staged. What the implications of these developments are or will be, no one really knows. Furthermore, as we have concluded that new religious phenomena are, in their American version, politically left, their politics is not subjected to careful scrutiny. My feeling is that what makes new religious phenomena harmless is their constitutionally guaranteed freedom which takes the teeth out of any fanaticism. While the constitutions of western liberal democracies preserve the freedom of new religions, I am not sure whether new religions, including New Age and neo-paganism, preserve western liberal democracies. In Weimar they did not.

Karla Poewe is professor of anthropology in the Anthropology Department of the University of Calgary. She has published eight books, some co-authored with Prof. Irving Hexham, e.g. New Religions as Global Cultures (1997), Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture (1994), and Matrilineal Ideology (1981). She has carried out research in Zambia, Namibia, South Africa, and, for this paper, Germany. Correspondence: Department of Anthropology, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank the Pew Foundation for funding my archival work and the University of Calgary for funding Irving Hexham's and my research in Germany. We studied manuscripts in Berlin archives and the Staatsbibliothek in 1995 and conducted interviews with a number of people (who wish to remain anonymous) in Marburg, Kassel, and Stuttgart in the summer of

1997. We are working on a book regarding this subject. All translations from the German are mine.
2. Edmond Vermeil's *Hitler et le christianisme* (1944) does not distinguish between conservative revolution and national socialism. Already in 1946, the French called these phenomena neo-paganism (Mohler, 1989a: 222).
 3. Payne is only half right when he argues that the *nouvelle droite* "rejects the mysticism and idealism of Evola, affirming the importance of science in modern life and relying heavily on the new sociobiology" (Payne, 1995: 510). The emphasis on science, already seen in Ludendorff and Hunke, and the emphasis on sociobiology (Krebs, 1981a) is correct. Despite this, Evola is a leading light of both G.R.E.C.E. and the Thule Seminar (interview with Pierre Krebs, summer 1997; see also Krebs, 1997: 13, 26, 32, 40, 43, 46, 49, 66, 69).
 4. Recently, the DVU won 12.9% of the vote in Sachsen-Anhalt.
 5. Woods argues that the ideas of Conservative Revolutionaries were "expressions of tensions", like finding meaning in the sacrifice of WWI. It is by studying the changing responses of diverse writers (Jünger, Zehrer, Spengler) to these tensions that Woods is able to chronicle the transition from democracy to activism, struggle for its own sake, leadership principle and National Socialist dictatorship (Woods, 1996: 6, 88–100, 115–132).
 6. In fact, their thinking is dualistic, only it is directed against those outside of the whole.
 7. Organic individualism refers to the responsibility of everyone doing his own thing, in harmony with godliness, and within the context of being rooted in a distinct ethnic group or nation.
 8. "Wie es die Seele erlebte" and "Wie die Vernunft es sah" are the headings of the two parts of her book (1921).
 9. Her criticisms were published by J. F. Lehmann Verlag, part of the publishing infrastructure of the Conservative Revolution. Lehmann also produced a series on South Africa to which Afrikaaner nationalists like Rompel, Kestell, Vijoën, and President Paul Krüger contributed (Poewe & Hexham, 1998).
 10. Smart (1997) says that the dimensions of religious and secular world-views are the same.
 11. Hunke's books are bestsellers.
 12. 'Weltall' can be translated as 'cosmos' or 'universe'. The literal translation is preferred here, because M. Ludendorff's godly being experienced as will addressed primarily the will of Germans in the time after Versailles. It is used to fight other ideologies of the world—British social Darwinism, for example.
 13. Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819).
 14. One of several corollaries of the individualism of unequals is the National Socialist teaching that "Volk is eternal" (Kneller, 1941: 56) or that "man comes and goes but his people is eternal" (ibid: 57).
 15. One of the main ideologues of DUR, in addition to Hunke, is Hubertus Mynarek (*ökologische Religion*) (Mecklenburg, 1996: 379). For Mynarek, born in 1929, religiosity is a biological fact (*Tatsache*) (Kratz, 1994: 120–121).
 16. The Thule Seminar of approximately 50 members was founded in 1980 (Mecklenburg, 1996: 311–314). Its name recalls the tradition of the *Thule-Gesellschaft* and its connection to National Socialism (Rose, 1994). The Thule Seminar is connected with the Grabert Verlag in Tübingen, which published the book by Rose and the books by Krebs and de Benoist. Payne only mentions the Thule Society that grew out of the *Germanen Orden* and was founded by Sebottendorf in 1917–1918 (Payne, 1995: 151). Payne does not mention the *élite*, intellectual, and influential Thule Seminar of today.
 17. *Unitarier* can be found on the Internet at www.metacrawler.com See also <http://www.nadeshda.org/bib/dur.htm>
 18. This is what Hauer (1937: vii) means by *Glaube*, the original experience of ultimate reality and the realm of inner power that is buried deep within the foundation of the soul of races and *Völker*.

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